

Armor of God—Shield of Faith

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By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—One of the most encouraging sections of Scripture is found in the book of Ephesians. In that letter, the apostle Paul described a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-13) and the spiritual weapons (verses 14-17) available for the children of God to use.

In this article, we will discuss the fourth weapon—the shield of faith (verse 16).

What He had promised

One of my favorite sections of Scripture to describe faith is found in Romans 4:19-21.

Romans 4:19-21—“And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.”

I love that phrase “what He had promised He was also able to perform.”

Do you remember what God had promised to Abraham back in Genesis 17?

Genesis 17:7—“And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.”

Genesis 17:16—“And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her.”

Faithful people make mistakes

Please let me show you something in the Bible that I simply love. The role models in the Bible are as human as you and I are.

Remember Romans 4:20-21? Did you notice the phrase that Abraham “did not waver” in verse 20? Did you notice the phrase about Abraham “being fully convinced” in verse 21?

■ Genesis 17:17—Abraham laughed at God’s plan—suggesting that he father a child at his age.

■ Genesis 17:18—Abraham negotiated—suggesting an alternative plan to God about having the seed to continue through his son Ishmael instead of fathering a new son.

Couldn't that be considered wavering? Couldn't that be considered not being fully convinced?

Sure, he was generally convinced. And our heavenly Father was understanding and forgiving toward Abraham when he was behaving like most humans.

At this time, allow me to mention two reasons people have a problem with faith.

Misinterpreting a promise

First, I believe that people misinterpret promises.

Mark 11:23-24—"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Will a person have whatever he "says" (asks for)?

James 4:3—"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Confusing faith and hope

Second, I believe that people confuse faith and hope.

- I believe that faith is based more upon facts—knowing and accepting the promises.
- I believe that hope is based more upon feelings and emotions—anticipating the promises.
- I believe that faith and hope work together.
- Acts 24:14—believing all things
- Acts 24:15—hope in God